

# MINUTES

First Quarterly Meeting of the  
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION  
Held, pursuant to notice  
Tuesday, January 22, 2002 — 10:00 AM  
Central Office Headquarters — 1719 Southridge Drive  
Jefferson City, MO

## I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
- B. New Commissioner Bernadette Miller introduced by Chairman Niewoehner
- C. Roll Call  
In attendance: **Chairman, Carl Niewoehner, Member Bernadette Miller, Member Joseph Frank, Member Reginald Bassa and Member Donald Gralike**
- D. Introductions  
Guests and staff present.
  - 1. Guests: **Ron Keale and Andy Scott**, National Military Education and Heritage Center; **Col. Jerry Brown**, Wentworth Military Academy Project Heritage; **Col. (Ret.) Wayne Medley**, Director, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Jim Whitfield**, Western Area Coordinator, MO Military Funeral Honors Program; **Norman Campbell**-Commander American Legion, Dept. of MO, Chairman MAVO; **Gary Campbell**, Director Columbia VA Hospital, representing Patricia Crosetti, CEO Heartland Veterans Health Network **Gary Williams**, Director, Regional Office Dept. Veterans Affairs; **Brad Pendleton**, Veterans Service Center Mgr., VA Regional Office; **Jon Schneider**, VA Regional VSO Liaison; **John Eckhoff**, Veterans Service Manager, St. Louis County Dept. of Human Services, **Thomas Chapman**, MAVO Secretary, Retired Enl. Assn.; **Michael Bounds**, St. Louis City VSO; **Al Bailey**, Retired, Marine Corps League; **Columbia American Legion Post Members: Ralph Skelly, Bill Hobbs, George Ace Parker, Col Claude Barton**
  - 2. Staff: **Sam McVay**, Executive Director; **Ronald Taylor**, Associate Director; **Anne Payne**, Superintendent of Homes; **Tim Norton**, Director of Properties; **Jill Talken**, Executive Secretary; **Jess Rasmussen**, Director Higginsville Cemetery; **Mike Robbins**, Director Springfield Cemetery; **Jerry Quigley**, Director Jacksonville Cemetery; **Ken Swearingin**, Director Bloomfield Cemetery; **Ralph Durnbaugh**, Director Veterans Benefits Awareness;
- E. Approval of November 16, 2001 Commission Meeting Minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as recorded.
- F. Chairman Niewoehner presented a plaque of appreciation to Deborah Halter outgoing Vice Chairman, Missouri Veterans Commission.

## II. NEW BUSINESS:

Military Honors Program – Col. Medley, Director, MO Military Funeral Honors Program, Announced to date 15,175 National Military Honors Funeral had been performed. In FY 2003 7,170 ceremonies have been coordinated.

New item to mention MO Military Funeral Honors Coin is being presented to the families in remembrance of the Funeral Honors and the people that work with the program.

**Cemeteries** – Jess Rasmussen, MVC Higginsville Cemeteries updated Committee completed 180 burials this week, and there is 1,010 pre-registered burials.

Mike Robbins, Springfield Cemeteries reported to the Committee on Springfield Cemetery. To date 650 burials completed and approx. 2,000 certifications completed.

### III. OLD BUSINESS:

Management Report: Executive Director Comments: Sam McVay

**VCCITF**- Report on VCCITF has been completed and distributed out to all legislators this week. This report is intended to explain MVC history, maps, key contacts and funding sources.

In addition a letter was sent from MAVO to legislators identifying the VCCITF as a priority issue with MAVO during this legislative session.

**Jefferson Barracks** – A Celebration of the Citizen Soldier. A concept for an exciting new museum complex at one of America's Great Historic Sites. A booklet was distributed to Commission members.

**Fundraising Promotion** – Establishing a foundation to accept private gifts for promotion of Veterans benefits. Jim Whitfield, Jack Mathews and Frank Green have signed incorporation papers to form the Missouri Veterans Commission Foundation. The funds will be used for Increasing benefits awareness, build relationships with communities and boost employee morale and welfare. Large gifts will go into the foundation. MVC is in the process of filing a 5013C recognition with the IRS.

In addition Lt. Governor Maxwell along with other Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force members are on a standing committee within the VBATF who also will be working on raising money for veterans benefits awareness. They will focus on large corporations.

The Missouri Veterans Commission also has the Veterans Trust Fund established in 1989 to enhance and expand services offered to veterans through the commission. You may designate on line 46b of the Missouri Tax return any amount over \$2.00 to go towards the trust fund.

Lt. Governor Maxwell will be addressing these issues at the Joint Veterans Committee meeting to be held January 22, at 5:00 p.m. in Senate Lounge.

**News Media** – SB 676, Sponsored by Senator Yeckel asks for proceeds from the gambling dollars be split 50/50, part going to Missouri Veterans Commission and part to the States Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund as the bill originally passed.

**Budget** – The Missouri Veterans Commission is watching the National Tax Issue. If this passes we are looking at approximately \$600 million loss in revenues to the state of Missouri. The Governor's withholding of \$2.3 million has been turned back into the states funding per the Governors budget cuts. Along with this Missouri Veterans Commission also cut \$27,000 in E&E money from next years core budget.

**VBATF** – The Veterans Benefits Awareness Task Force met on January 18<sup>th</sup> and has adopted a message to go out to the communities to increase Veteran Benefits Awareness. The Response to Application Committee hosted a statewide meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup> in St. Louis at the St. Louis

Regional VA Office to promote benefits awareness to MVC Service Officers, VA Service Officers and Service Organization Leaders.

Ralph Durnbaugh, Director Veteran Benefits Awareness updated the Commission on his visit to Oklahoma with the Director of Veterans Affairs. The Lt. Governor has recommended the task force develop a sustained plan that will run for years.

John Eckhoff, St. Louis County Dept of Human Services, has committed to MVC to chair three Veterans Supermarkets in the St. Louis area to promote veterans benefits awareness. Mr. Eckhoff also will be chairing the committee to conduct statewide Veterans Supermarkets.

Missouri Veterans Homes: Anne Payne, Director of Homes

**Homes Program** – Recruiting and interviewing for a Nurse IV; Nurse Quality Management Specialist.

Duties performed will include planning, directing and evaluating nursing services as the Assistant Director of Nursing in a facility with a nursing program of considerable scope and diversity or as the Director of Nursing in a facility with less diverse nursing program. Develop nursing policy and procedures. Position to be filled in March.

Enhance working relationship with Labor Organizations. Meetings held with Administrators, Directors of Nursing Services and Personnel Officers to talk about and better understand new revised statutes, statewide policies and collective bargaining agreement and how the executive order works.

Chairman Niewoehner asked of the number of beds in the Cameron Veterans Home. Ms. Payne indicated Cameron Home has 130 beds filled and Warrensburg Home has 120 beds filled to date. Both homes will be increased to 150 beds each by end of June.

Director, Department of Public Safety, Charles Jackson was introduced by Sam McVay. Mr. Jackson spoke briefly to the Commission members and meeting attendees and thanked the Commissioners for their work and the work they do for the Missouri veterans. The Missouri Veterans Commission is a Type III agency in which the Commission reports budget information through the Dept. of Public Safety.

Construction Update: Tim Norton

**Construction** – Report Update January 22, 2002, prepared by Tim Norton was handed out. (attachment)

Service to Veterans Program: Ronald Taylor, Associate Director

Ronald Taylor reported to the Commission Carl Hargus, Director, Service to Veterans Program is out due to illness.

**TRIP III Training** – Phase 1 of TRIP II Training for Service Officers was completed in December. Trip II Training for all other employees of MVC that's interested will be conducted in the spring.

David Lexa has been hired as Veterans Service Officer effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, and will be available in Phelps, Crawford, Franklin and Maries counties to assist veterans.

Cemeteries: Ron Taylor, Associate Director

**Cemeteries Program** – Cemetery Directors have been hired for the two new cemeteries that are soon to be under construction.

Bloomfield Cemetery: Ken Swearingin will be trained on veteran benefits and computer training.

Jacksonville Cemetery: Jerry Quigley

Congress established the State Cemetery Grants Program administered by the National Cemetery System to aid states in the establishment, expansion and improvement of veteran's cemeteries, the State Cemetery Grants Program complements the National Cemetery System by providing gravesites for veterans in those areas not adequately served by national cemeteries. The state of Kentucky would like to enter into this agreement with the state of Missouri. A Memorandum of Agreement is attached. Further review will be done and discussed at the next commission meeting.

Representative Bill Boucher, House Veterans Committee Chair, asked the Commission to pass a resolution allowing a New Cemetery Feasibility Study to be performed which will be offered and funded in a house bill that Representative Boucher will sponsor. Federal Government funds entire cost of construction, while the state pays 100% operation and maintenance cost. In this VA requires a feasibility study to be completed. The cost of this study will have to be funded through the legislation. Representative Boucher explained the need for the additional cemeteries and wrote letters to Senator Bond and Senator Carnahan, City Mayors of Belton and Grandview and veterans in the Kansas City area asking for support and approval to obtain land and construct a new Veterans Cemetery at the Richards Gebauer Air Base site in Kansas City. Representative Boucher informed the Commissioners that the current lawsuit filed against Richards Gebauer would have no threat on the accrual of land. Timeframe of the study and the design and construction of the new cemetery would be estimated within 5 years for completion. After much discussion, Commission Frank made a motion to adopt the Cemetery Feasibility Study for all three locations to include St. Louis area, Ft. Leonard Wood and Kansas City area. Commissioner Gralike seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

**Service Organization Grants Program** – Mr. Taylor told the Commission that the grant payments that Missouri Veterans Commission has been issuing since September has been working very well, however St. Louis City grant application requested funding for legal assistance to veterans that MVC felt needed clarification from the Attorney General's Office on the legality has not been issued yet due to no response from the Attorney General's office. MVC has also requested interpretation on the language of the law with regards to possible eligibility to St. Louis Co. and no response has been received as well. Mr. Taylor will follow up with the Attorney General's Office inquiring about those responses.

Meetings will be organized over the next couple of months with Service Organizations to look at their budgets over the next year and try to tie together cooperation in funding for the Veterans Benefits Awareness Program, Veterans Supermarkets, and a mobile van, by possible utilization of the grants program assisting them. DAV, American Legion, VFW and the Vietnam Veterans of America organizations have already received funds from MVC in the amount of \$200,000 between the four organizations. AMVETS have not yet filed but have indicated they will be sending in the paper work.

Senator Anita Yeckel was introduced to the Commission. Senator Yeckel informed the Commissioners of her support of the Cemetery Feasibility Study in order to construct a cemetery in the St. Louis area. The current veteran cemetery Jefferson Barracks is expected to be full within the next 5 to 10 years. She expressed the need for the cemetery in the St. Louis area to the Commission. Senator Yeckel has offered SB 676 that will indicate proceeds from the gambling dollars be split 50/50, part going to Missouri Veterans Commission and part to the States Early Childhood Development, Education and Care Fund.

Memorial Grants: Ron Taylor, Associate Director

**Memorial Grants Program** – Reported on the following (attachments):

**National Military Education and History Museum**

Request is for a quarterly disbursement of \$400,000

Recommendation:

- 1.) Recommend payment of \$300,000 as soon as all signed documents for transfer of land are received.
- 2.) Recommend Commission staff be authorized to issue checks for up to \$100,000 for purposes requested as soon as signed contract, invoices or other verification of payment or obligations is received.

Andy Scott, Executive Director National Military Education and History Museum discussed the hand out information to the Commissioners. Ron Keale, Fund Development Council, Kansas City, is in support of the National Military Education and History Museum and informed the Commission that development work is in progress and they are working on campaigning information. Land status at Wentworth Military Academy had been obtained along with a clear title and agreements have been signed. The Commission recommends a timeline schedule be provided to the Commissioners indicating milestones of stages of work projection dates. An agreement was signed by the parties that indicate if in the event the project is not completed the land will be acquired by MVC as payment for the land appraisal amount which to date is appraised at up to \$2 million. Commissioner Gralike made motion to adopt Ron Taylor's recommendation as reported. Commissioner Frank seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Representative Bill Ransdall spoke to the Commissioners in support of a new cemetery to be constructed at Ft. Leonardwood. He explained the land layout to be obtained for the cemetery and describes the scenery around the tract of land to be acquired. Representative Ransdall has support from Congressman Skelton and General Flowers. Representative Ransdall will file this bill the same as HB 832 was filed.

Mr. Taylor suggested internal guidelines be established to determine how long a grant should be held before the grant is revoked. Discussion as to whether grantees should be told a timeframe in which they must report on progress in order for the grant to be held. The next Commission meeting Mr. Taylor will bring recommendation as to whether we want to revoke a current grant situation that is having problems with matching grant funds.

**V. ELECTION OF OFFICER:**

**Election of Commission Officer** - Commissioner Bassa made a motion to elect Joseph Frank as Vice Chairman of the commission. Commissioner Gralike seconded the motion. By a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

**IV. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Hal Dulle, Assistant the Director, Missouri Veterans Commission, informed the Commissioners Line 46b of the Missouri Tax return any amount over \$2.00 to go towards the trust fund. He also advised that he has met with accounting agencies in and encouraging clients to contribute to veterans. Payroll stuffers will be distributed to all state employees on January 31 explaining how

donations can be made to support the Missouri Veterans Trust Fund. The Commission recommended to contact MO State Retirement and Teachers Retirement in reference to payroll stuffers for retirees. Another source for advertising Mr. Dulle is working with Office of Administration to develop a message out the states website.

VA Update: Gary Williams, Director, Regional Office Dept. Veterans Affairs and Brad Pendleton, Veterans Service Center Mgr., reported to the Commission on veterans comp and pension claims. To date there is 12,000 claims pending to be processed. In this figure, 40% of the 12,000 claims are currently over 180 days old. An average comp claim to be processed is approximately 200 days. WWII Veterans that are 70 years or older are considered priority cases and being worked as they are received in the VA office. Mr. Williams indicated they will be receiving 14 additional staff in the near future to assist with claims process, however it takes 4 years for the officers to completely trained in all areas.

Gary Campbell, Director Columbia VA Hospital informed the Commission the clinics associated with the state veterans homes are currently under inspection and will start leasing effective March. VA will resume working together with MVC staff on the continuity of continual care issues for veterans in the state veterans homes and as they need care in the VA hospitals. Parking at John Cochran VA Hospital in St. Louis is a problem and VA is currently working on a possible lead of a donation of property for parking. Update on matching grant that MVC provided to Columbia VA Hospital and veteran organizations, raised money for the veterans memorial of the Congressional Medal of Honors of the State of Missouri, located on the grounds of the hospital, is in the design stages and soon to be ready for construction bid process. Plans to have memorial completed and dedication around Memorial Day.


Jim Whitfield, Western Area Coordinator, MO Military Funeral Honors Program asked what hospitals will be providing support to the CBOC locations. Mr. Campbell informed the Commission the following:

- Columbia VA Hospital – Mexico, St. James
- St. Louis VA Hospital – St. Louis
- Kansas City VA Hospital – Cameron, Warrensburg
- Poplar Bluff VA Hospital – Cape Girardeau
- Fayetteville VA Hospital – Mt. Vernon

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting commission will be held on Friday, May 10, 2002 at 10:00 a.m.,

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.



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Samuel E. McVay, Ph.D., Secretary